

2 THE SETTING

[32] The rainfall ranges from twenty-two to twenty-seven inches, in normal years; and is heavier as one moves from north to south. The important point that must be kept sight of is the fact that ninety percent of the rain falls in June, July, August, and September, while the months from October through June are almost totally dry. Indeed even within the four-month rainy season, about eighteen inches of the annual rainfall comes during July and August, so that in exceptionally dry years, June and September can easily turn out to be rainless months.

[37] The various seasons are tied closely to the basic facts of rainfall and latitude. As the rain begins in June the dry sandy soil suddenly comes to life with large stretches of new grass and new leaves on the died-up thorn bushes. From atop one of the Bornu ridges, or from the roof of a house, the entire landscape, as far as the eye can see, starts to change color from yellow-brown to a soft green. The weather cools delightfully, the rains become more frequent, and the short daily storms freshen the air. The people call this period "the rain," and consider it by [22] far the most pleasant time of the year, even though there is extra work for every-
[82] body because this is the planting and hoeing season, and there is as well the extra
[36] unpleasantness of increased numbers and endless varieties of insects that thrive at this time. After the rains in the months of October and November, and often into mid-December the proximity to the equator produces a short, hot season with clear, still days. In a sense this is autumn. The green of summer fades and the bushland changes to light browns, yellows and grays, except for the ripening millet in the fields, and the evergreen Nim tree. Towards the end of this season the weather cools, and a daily wind from the north to northeast blows in from the Sahara. This is the famous Harmattan that even coats shoreward sides of ships with red dust [75] 100 miles off the coast of West Africa. It starts up about eight o'clock in the morning, to wane by about four in the afternoon, making for relatively cool, still mornings and evenings, with rather harsh, sandy winds, for most of the day, so that one wants to cover face and eyes when riding on horseback, especially into the wind. [22] The people have a special word for this time of year which translates as "winter" but which also means "harvest," since the main crops—millet, guinea corn, and
[24] ground-nuts—are harvested towards the end of autumn and beginning of winter. By the end of February or beginning of March the coolness of winter has gone. The Harmattan wind still blows but it gets hotter every day and the nights, although windless and a trifle cooler than the days, begin to approach the daytime temperature. Indeed it is not uncommon for the temperature to remain about 100° F for several weeks on end, so that when a break finally comes, ninety degrees [82] seems like an exuberantly pleasant relief. This is the hot season, called "the heat" locally, and considered by all to be the most unpleasant time of year, which gives even greater sweetness to the cooling rains when they finally arrive in June.

There are, then, in all, four seasons: the rains from June to September; a short, hot season in October and November; a cooler, windy winter from December to February; and a sharply hot dry period from March to June. Another way of looking at the seasons, also used by the people, and one which will be utilized to some extent in this book, is to simply speak of a dry season, from September to June, and a wet season from mid-June to mid-September. Obviously the contrast between the various seasons of the dry months is not nearly so great as between the rainy months and the rest of the year.

6 · THE SETTING

361 everyone knows where the boundaries lie between village areas, or between hamlets and other settlements, and there is plenty of land for expansion and for the wandering cattle nomads who traverse the area annually moving their cattle north and south with the coming and going of the rains.

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361 The settlements are all made up of walled compounds and within these are the mud-walled houses with conical thatched roofs, or sometimes grass mat walls with thatched roofs. In the northeast of Bornu the people specialize in a bee-hive shaped house of bound thatch which can be picked up and moved and can reach a size of twenty to thirty feet in diameter, although ten to fifteen feet is more common. A compound is almost always rectangular in shape with mud or grass mat walls and internal partitions. There is only one entrance which is often a house with two doors so that there is a shelter at the doorway for people to gather and visit with the household head. The compounds in any settlement are always arranged in a "U"-shape with the open end towards the west and the closed end on the east. The arms of the U then form the north and south sides of the open plaza where all the major events of town take place. Although in very tiny settlements, big cities, or settlements that have lost a great many people, this U-shape is not often easy to discover, it can be seen by simply asking people where they have their central plaza. When this is pointed out, the questioner knows exactly where to look for the house of the senior political leader of the settlement since his household is always at the bottom of the U in the center facing west. Parenthetically, this means [622] that when individuals or groups pray and bow down toward the east in the open plaza, which they often do, they face the doorway of their local political leader's compound. [988]

• 241 Around the villages are fields of millet, the major food staple, guinea corn, ground-nuts, the major cash crop, and numerous specialized crops of vegetables or gourds that vary from place to place depending upon local conditions. Almost everybody does a little farming while goods not produced within the household itself are purchased at local weekly markets that dot the countryside in each of the major villages. [743]

171 In their culture the Kanuri share ideas about religion, social organization, and subsistence patterns with many of the other peoples of the Western Sudan. [302] Even esoteric items such as pre-pubescent boys' hair styles are shared across wide areas of the southern and central Sahara ranging as far away as Morocco. In their [291] patterns of dress—workshirts and long ground-length robes for men, long shirts and saris for women—they again share many items with surrounding peoples as [231] they do in their love of horses which give a man prestige unless he is one of the [554] few in the cities that owns an automobile. Their language, Kanuri, is not related to [197] other languages of Nigeria, but is shared and closely related to a large group of tongues called Central Saharan that ranges from the Tibesti highlands in northern Chad to Bornu in the southwest and the Darfur region in the modern nation of [193] Sudan, in the southeast. It is a graceful language in which the verb comes at the [195] end of the sentence as in Latin and in which there are many polite circumlocutions for saying things diplomatically. Thus if I wish to say a man is untrustworthy, I do not say it outright. Instead I say quietly that he has narrow eyes, which comes from the saying, "A man with narrow eyes has no shame," he lacks proper respect for his obligations to others. There are many greetings which are adjusted to social rank,

KANEM-BORNU: SOCIAL AND POLITICAL BACKGROUND · 19

mans and ruled it after World War I as a League of Nations Trust Territory, (later a U.N. Trust Territory) which meant in practice that it was part of the administrative responsibility of the colonial officials in Northern Nigeria. To appreciate more clearly what changes were brought about by colonialism, however, it is necessary to understand something of the social, economic, and in particular the political structure of Bornu, as it developed during pre-colonial times, and it is to this task that the remainder of the chapter is devoted.

Kanem-Bornu: The Social and Political Background

Only the sketchiest oddments of information are available about the nature of Kanem society. One Arabic record speaks of its capital as a city of tents, and traditions tell of a "Council of Nobles" that had a great deal of power over decision-making by the king, or Mai as he was called. From this and a few other data, such as the emphasis placed on the clan membership of persons mentioned in the early periods of the dynastic lists, we can attempt a reconstruction that fits the facts. The early kingdom seems to have been made up of patrilineal, named clans under senior or noble lineages (also named) whose heads formed the so-called "Council of Nobles" under the king or Mai. The Mai himself was head of the senior lineage of a senior clan considered to be the most important or powerful in the region. In all probability the term "Mai" or "king" was used for all leaders of clans just as it is today among some of the nomadic and semi-nomadic peoples of the Sahara to the north of Lake Chad who are closely related to the Kanuri. It also appears that the great Kanuri king lists are just what local people say they are—lists of the leaders of the Magumi Sefuwa or Sefuwa lineage heads of the Magumi clan. People in the clan considered themselves related by ties of descent to a common ancestor; but they could not describe the exact link with him, while they could describe the genealogical ties through men that made them all Sefuwa. Very probably these people utilized both cattle and domesticated plants although their early city of tents, referred to by Arabic historians, also suggests a greater emphasis on nomadism and the use of cattle. This is consistent with the clan organization described above; indeed this form of organization is widespread among nomadic and semi-nomadic peoples in the Sahara, North Africa, the Horn of Africa, and Arabia. Later, as attested by the ruins at Garamoulé northwest of Lake Chad they probably built more permanent settlements and very likely used slaves from the south of Lake Chad as trade goods and as agricultural laborers.

How centralized and developed the early stages of the Kanem state really were is an intriguing and difficult question and one that can be solved only by extensive historical and archaeological research. Certainly concepts of statecraft from Islamic areas to the north of the desert and trips by Kanem monarchs to Mecca would have acquainted the rulers with the ideas of very highly centralized states. How much this actually affected Bornu is unknown, although it is possible that tensions over the power of the central monarch were another reason for the civil strife which led eventually to the migration of the Sefuwa from Kanem to Bornu.

After the Sefuwa set up their kingdom in Bornu the state became a much more highly organized and centrally controlled political system. The people who

HOUSEHOLDS AS PRODUCERS 77

Clothing, like food, is in the hands of the household head although, and as in the case of food, he is always pressured to obtain and distribute more than he can afford. At harvest time, or major religious ceremonies during the year, and at celebrations of *rites de passage* by household members, new clothing is in order and is expected by everyone. Clients and subordinates in nearby households expect gifts of clothing as well. Wealthy men may find it necessary to purchase several hundred men's robes a year just to satisfy their many dependents; on the other hand, a normal peasant householder can usually get by annually with under a half a dozen for male household members including himself and a similar number of women's robes for his wives. 592 577 291 511

Household heads must also organize and pay for repairs to compound walls and sleeping huts, fuel and equipment for cooking fires, and kerosene for the lamps. They must supply as well the ladies of the household with money for their fortnightly hair styling, perfumes, pomade for rubbing on their skin, and kola nuts. When someone is sick, they must consult the religious practitioner and the native doctor who diagnose the case, start the necessary prayers, and sell charms to effect a cure. Besides all this they must enter into community life, go to the weddings, naming ceremonies of friends, and have these friends come to their own ceremonies. Each time they attend affairs they and their household members must give gifts to those responsible for the ceremony. The more a man gives and the more often he goes to such ceremonies, the more successful and wealthy and contact-laden he is reputed to be. Most people are prudent and do not go beyond their means. Indeed the Kanuri term for "spendthrift" translates literally as "one who goes to many ceremonies." 592 511 [431] [554] [92]

Consumption at the household level is organized by the household head and carried out under his guidance and control. He is constantly purchasing more so he can distribute it more generously to more people; yet for the ordinary household the bulk of the expenditure, roughly sixty percent of the household's earning power, is for food, and the next largest item is clothing, at about fifteen percent. This leaves approximately twenty-five percent of the household earning capacity to take care of everything in cash and kind beyond the simple necessities of food and clothing.³

Households as Producers 433

Kanuri production is tied traditionally to two interrelated factors in the physical and social environment of Bornu. These are, first, the geographical and ecological characteristics of the area, and secondly, the way in which agricultural and nonagricultural pursuits complement one another in the economy. The Bornu area has a short rainy season from June to September and crop production is carried out during these months. Planting begins about the time of the first rains, and the first hoeing takes place shortly afterward. The second hoeing is carried on from the beginning of October to the end of November. Each hoeing requires between two to three weeks' work and harvesting may take as long as a month to a month and a half. Between these periods, beyond occasional scrutiny to see that straying [32] 241 • 221

³ These data and much of the other material for this chapter were obtained (a) from detailed budget studies in a small sample of twenty-two rural households, and (b) from a less detailed survey of seventy-five rural households in three villages in the Magumeri area. [114]

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241 cattle have not broken into and eaten the produce, very little work is required in
221 cultivating crops. Thus work on crop production is concentrated into less than six
months leaving the rest of the year free for other activities:

241 Although almost all Kanuri households obtain some food and some cash
433 from their farm plots, the amount of farming varies from person to person, from
434 village to village, and even for the same person from season to season. In the city,
592 many people have dropped farming and manage to earn enough cash income to
furnish their needs from the market. In the villages some households, usually in
areas of good soil and water supply, produce agricultural surpluses, while in other
areas the farm work provides only part of the household needs. Again some farm-
ers tend to produce fairly similar amounts of grain crops per year while others fluc-
tuate, so that they produce practically nothing some years and large bounties a few
years later. Increased prices of ground-nuts and guinea corn stimulate greater
household farming activities while trade and other nonfarming activities may inter-
fere with a man's farming. Sickness in the compound as well as blight and soil de-
pletion tend to decrease agricultural proceeds, and finally in the rural areas increase
or decrease in household size, especially in the number of wives, all tend to affect
the fluctuation of crop proceeds from one household to another or within the same
household over time. People who report themselves to be primarily farmers pro-
duce more than those who report themselves to be craftsmen, although for the Ma-
gumeri area the difference, when measured, does not seem to be very great. On the
other hand, traders and political and religious specialists seem to produce approxi-
mately one quarter to one third as much on their farms as other people, and many
in this category do not farm at all.

241 The importance of wives has already been noted. The number of wives
464 available to any cultivator, as well as the number of his male subordinates in the
592 household, is the major factor affecting crop production. The high divorce rate
593 makes this primary source of labor somewhat unpredictable for each farmer. On
[433] the other hand it also helps to stabilize marriage. Thus the more men depend upon
help from their wives the less likely they are to divorce them, although their efforts
in this direction are never completely successful and the insecurity of farm help is
always there. The insecurity can be alleviated by using sons or clients or laborers,
[479] all of whom require payment in some way for their help. All rural Kanuri at times
help their neighbors, their relatives, or friends to farm and often a group of such
men get together to help one another in a cooperative work gang and then recipre-
cate by helping each other in turn. Thus although many Kanuri do move around in
241 Bornu, farming favors the most stable who can build up social relations in one
371 place that can be utilized in the form of labor to offset the possible insecurity
caused by the ever-present high divorce rate.

241 To make the situation more complicated many Kanuri are not rooted in the
57 land emotionally. It is part of both the traditional and contemporary Kanuri con-
183 ception of getting ahead in the world that personal advancement is not to be found
[557] in farming. Achievement in Bornu is seen as stemming out of profitable social rela-
[177] tionships and more recently western schooling. If it is judged to be personally
[871] profitable for an individual to leave his farm work in order to become someone's
[123] client, there is little hesitation. Men asked me to take them on as clients and give
them some money for trading purposes. They offered to travel anywhere in Bornu

and then bring me the profits whether or not they had crops growing and whether or not they had labor to carry on the cultivation. If I asked them what would happen to their farm they showed little concern and said merely that they farm because they can do nothing else. The implication is that if they had anything better to do they would stop farming immediately.

Land for agriculture is not scarce in Bornu and all settlements except the capital city have plenty of free or unused land within their boundaries. Adjacent to a Kanuri village or hamlet are the farm plots of long-term members of the settlement and their descendants who have inherited these "house-farms" as they are called in Kanuri because they represent land attached to households. These plots are always bounded and often fertilized by the village sheep and goats. In Magumeri house-farms extend in a circle around the village for a radius of about three quarters of a mile. Outside this circle are isolated farm plots dotted here and there and free land as well as pasture land. Ownership is obtained by clearing such land after having registered this intent with the village head, by inheriting a plot, or by having it given it by the previous owner. The Kanuri see house-farm land as symbolizing long-term and stable association with a village or city, while bush farms, although everyone has a few such plots, mean transience or newness because the household head who farms only these does not yet have any farm plots identified with his compound so that people can say, "There is Modu's house, his house-farms are in such-and-such a spot." Instead they say, "That is Modu, he has moved into so-and-so's house or built a house near so-and-so, and has cleared a few new farm plots a mile or two to the south of town."

An interesting and yet difficult question is that of land ownership. The way in which land is owned can be seen in those practices associated with acquisition and transfer. Anyone can clear new land or land that has been unclaimed for many years. He should report this to his local political leader whose permission is always granted if there are no known claims on the property. Again a man may go to the local political leader and ask where he can farm; he is then directed to available plots on the advice of the leader. Or land may be inherited, usually in the male line, or acquired as a gift from a friend, or it can even be sold. Political leaders sometimes try to exert themselves in being party to all land transfers so that their permission becomes part of the transaction, and they feel they have a legitimate right to do so when the previous owner has used the land for a short period. The difficulty here is that there is no definite rule to tell the Kanuri how long a man should use a piece of land during his own lifetime before he has a total right to transfer it to anyone else. On the other hand, they believe that once land has been inherited it is the property of the family, and decisions about its use and transfer are primarily in the hands of the owners. In practice the Kanuri always hold land because they are using it, having cleared it, inherited it, or come to some agreement over it with the previous owner. In the latter case this could mean anything from an outright sale, practiced more near the larger cities, to an agreement over it with the user who gives the previous owner some percentage of the crop. The system works well when household heads as land owners and users have good working relations with their local political leaders. If this is not the case, then political leaders often insist on helping to make decisions about the land and its ultimate transfer whether it has been held for a short time or a much longer one. I have seen or

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592 been told of many political leaders who rubber stamp decisions about land transfer, simply registering the fact and witnessing its legality. In some cases, however, there is interference, and it is generally discovered when this happens that there have been some previous difficulties in the owner's relationship to the political leader.

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241 Farm plots are generally used for periods of four to eight years. Then they are allowed to lie fallow for about the same length of time. Everyone in the community knows a fallow field and its owner, and there would be trouble if someone tried to use one of these without the owner's permission. If fallow land is unused because the owner has moved away or has given up farming, then the land reverts to the common disposal of the community as a whole. The political leader can then allot these lands to newcomers or other community members, although he would generally be careful to check claims on them by previous owners and their relatives before doing this.

423 In summary, from the point of view of the people themselves, there are four different kinds of land around a Kanuri village. First, there is land owned outright by the household head over which he has complete authority. Secondly, there is land that has been cleared by a household head or that he was given the right to use by his local leader and which may become totally his or that of his heirs after long years of use and/or inheritance. Thirdly there is resting land, which is a farm plot that has been in use but whose depleted soil the owner will likely use again. If he moves away without trying to dispense with any of these plots then they revert to free land. Finally, there is free unused land around the settlement that can be used for newcomers or those trying to expand their holdings.

[428] As far as ownership is concerned, about sixty percent of all land in Magumeri was obtained through inheritance. The remaining forty percent was almost all new land cleared outside the present circumference of farm plots in which the plots had been registered with the village head whose permission had been granted. The important thing to remember about this system is that it works. Litigation over land in [691] Magumeri had to do mostly with what we call "trespassing." People were brought to the courts because they (usually their livestock) had infringed on someone's right to land. There was very little difficulty in general over transfers. People knew what rights were held and how they could transfer these rights to others.

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[221] Except for the few farmers who produce either specialized crops like yams or tobacco and then market them, most Kanuri have a dry season occupation such as craftwork, trade, or a service occupation such as native doctoring or barbering. These they view as an occupation, while farming, unless it is the only specialty carried out, is viewed as an important side line. As we have seen in the chapter on the life cycle, recruitment into an occupation is carried on by an apprenticeship system within the household organization. This is even the case for some western types of occupation such as truck driving, and it only recedes in importance when western type schooling is involved.

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[178] Traditionally, occupations in Bornu have been organized under head men in each settlement and under an overall head man for the entire occupation who lived in the capital city. Today the traditional occupations such as blacksmith, leather worker, butcher, and so on still have such an organization, although the privileges and duties of a head man are very few and do not extend beyond his local settlement. Nevertheless, men in Magumeri who are butchers, blacksmiths or dyers, and

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[199] their families were not butchers in times past but conditions have forced them to "take up the knife." The craft requires anatomical knowledge of animals and a skilled use of the knife to cut and clean them. Besides this it necessitates continuous relations with cattle owners, many of whom are Shuwa and Fulani nomads who wander through the area.

Mala Bukar lives with his two wives, the younger of whom has a small child aged three, and two *tada njima* who are his apprentices. There are five huts in the compound, one each for the wives, one for Mala Bukar, one for the two apprentices, and one for meat storage. The apprentices are both unrelated to Mala Bukar by kinship, but both are the sons of butchers who are well known to him. The young boys explained that they wished to travel about the country before they settled down as butchers in their home villages. They treated Mala Bukar as they would their own father giving him all the subordination and respect due to a compound head. Mala Bukar's immediate neighbors, one to the north of him and one just to the east of him, are his younger brothers. One sells hides and skins, the other is a butcher and works closely with him although they generally butcher separately. They do, however, buy from nomads together, and often the younger brother looks after Mala Bukar's stall in the various markets they journey to together.

[428] The three brothers inherited their "house-farms" from their father. Mala Bukar—as the older brother who took over his father's household—took half while the other half was divided between the two younger brothers. Since then he has cleared one plot in free land far from town, and his apprentices are busy clearing a new one which Mala Bukar says is being cleared to replace an old one used for the last time several years ago (it is now fallow). The apprentices are also clearing small plots of their own near to the one they are preparing for the butcher and hope to get some extra cash from ground-nuts. Generally Mala Bukar estimates he obtained about ten bags (one ton) of millet and three bags (600 pounds) of ground-nuts.

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[964] The farm work itself is done by Mala Bukar's two wives and his apprentices who do not work together because it would be considered shameful for them to have to interact socially for any length of time. Mala Bukar decides on what is to be planted, when, and in what plots. He also decides on hoeing dates, and the time and scheduling of the harvest. The wives do less actual work in the field than many of their rural counterparts because of the apprentices, although they still take or send out cooked food to the boys during the hoeing season. Mala Bukar also [434] gives his wives the hooves of slaughtered animals which they are able to sell for extra spending money.

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[572] The work schedule of the household is tied to the supply of Mala Bukar's meat and local demands for it. During the dry season he slaughters mostly sheep and goats while the rainy season which brings the cattle nomads is more heavily the time for beef preparation. He almost always butchers on Saturdays, the day before the village market day, and may do some more on Sunday if selling is brisk at the market. During Sunday he hears about conditions in the villages close by that have markets on Monday and Tuesday. If demand there seems promising, or if he has unsold stock, he attends the Monday and Tuesday markets as well.

[221] Even with the apprentices, however, his turnover is not excessive. In the dry season he kills about four goats and/or sheep per week, and once in a while, usu-

- 433 economic situation in Bornu is determined to a large extent by
439 changes in the world market price of export items which are now
433 a vital part of the local economy. The Kanuri are an agricul-
• 241 tural people whose staple crop is millet. Along with millet,
the main crop is peanuts, grown for sale and ultimate export.
- 243 Every farmer grows millet for his family. Should he have a
438 surplus he sells it in the local markets. Most farmers also
244 raise peanuts as well. The nuts are bought by local trading
442 companies, acting as agents for the government controlled
455 Groundnut Marketing Board which buys the entire crop and
439 sells it on the world market. Cow hides and sheep and goat
237 skins are also brought by the trading companies for export,
439 and represent an important part of the total economy. The West
436 African Pound is the basic currency unit and the shilling is
the unit of trade in the remotest sections of the province.
Maria Theresa dollars are still in evidence but are rarely used
as currency.
- 439 A network of European trading companies exists throughout
442 Northern Nigeria. Almost all of them have canteens run by
473 European agents scattered in larger towns throughout the region.
The largest of these is the United Africa Company, a subsidiary
of Unilever. Others, John Holt and Co., Société Commerciale du
Oest Afrique, Compagnie Française du Afrique Occidental, and A.
G. Leventis and Co., are multi-million-dollar companies with
452 head offices in England or on the Continent. They all buy pea-
nuts, and hides and skins, and they buy through a complex system

tionably larger than anything found in Bornu today. However,
as in all pre-industrial societies, the bulk of the population
is engaged in agriculture and lives in the many small villages
dotting the plain.

One can never travel far in Bornu without encountering a
village. Major villages are linked to one another and to towns
by laterite roads. Tiny villages are linked by a network of
paths and tracks to one another. Surrounding each village
are the fields farmed by each family. Farm land can be had
by clearing the brush and making a plot ready for farming.
Since this is so easily done, land and its inheritance are not
important determinants of the social structure. In theory,
all land belongs to Allah and is in the hands of the Shehu of
Bornu, the political and religious head of all Kanuri. The
Shehu distributed large fiefs to Kanuri lords who gave the land
to the village heads for distribution to individual villagers.
In practice, any newcomer to a village has only to ask the vil-
lage head for permission to farm and suitable land will be given
to him which he must, of course, clear for planting. It natural-
ly happens that those most recently arrived in a village will
be given fields furthest from the houses, so that it is obvi-
ous that certain fields are more desirable than others. In
a town of some size this becomes important. Distant fields may
be up to three miles beyond the edge of town, and walking out
and back each day to plant or to harvest is a demanding task.
Farm land, however, is never bought and sold. In the city this

425 practice is undergoing change. House plots in desirable loca-
241 tions in Maiduguri, the capital city, are bought and sold,
178 though in theory land for one's house is obtained in the same
manner as farm land--by asking the village head for a site to
build one's house.

2. Subsistence Economy and Cash Crops.

243 Millet is the staple crop of the Kanuri, and both sorghum
(*Sorghum vulgare*) and pearl millet (*Pennisetum spicatum*) are
243 grown. Planting takes place immediately after the first rains
221 in May and the grain is harvested in September. The growing
season is short as rain falls only in the months between May
and September and not at all for the remainder of the year.
Consequently there is only one crop during the year. Since
millet grows without much attention, agricultural labor is
[462] needed only during planting, weeding, and harvesting. Men and
women work together in the fields during these periods. Crops
must be sown shortly after the onset of the rains for the grow-
ing time is relatively short and any delay in planting might
reduce the exposure to rainfall which is necessary for a good
harvest. Late planting in a year in which the total rainfall
[73] is slight can be disastrous for a family. Really bad years can
mean famine, and though there has not been a major famine since
World War I, that famine is remembered as a catastrophe. Older
people calculate their age in relation to the year of the fam-
ine. In the villages millet which a family harvests in Septem-

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425 land is sufficiently old so that he can sell the land if he
671 wishes to. If a man works a piece of land for a long time (for
425 ten years, for example) he can sell it. But in a recent legal
695 case a policeman who worked in Geidam was given land by the
Lowan. After a year he left Geidam for Maiduguri and sold the
land. The Alkali ruled that he had not had the land for a suf-
ficiently long period of time to enable him to sell it, and
forced him to return the sum of money which was paid to him by
the new owner.

- 241 Land is farmed under a variety of conditions. Talaka farm
565 the land themselves with the help of wives and children. A
592 wealthy man, however, may take a very large section of farm
land from the Lowan, which he will not work personally. Instead
the members of his household, his many tata njima, farm his land
for him. His tata njima work on the farm of the household head

[465] because this is one of their duties. They receive no payment
241 in the form of a share of the crops for their labor. Some
565 wealthy men may not have very large households of their own, and
464 may hire day laborers to work for them. This, too, is a new ap-
[178] proach to labor for the Kanuri. A man with a very large farm
241 who does not intend to use all of his land himself can rent out
427 sections, particularly if his land is in a very favorable loca-
tion. The renter pays a fixed sum to the owner, and the crops
belong entirely to him. No form of share-cropping is practiced.

241 The Ajia of Geidam has huge sections of land allotted to him.
634 Any of his people, his slaves, his kabuna or others attached to
[425]

[GEIDAM]

- 241 him, are given land from that belonging to the Ajia, should they
634
[554] desire to farm for themselves. Such a plot may be in a more
or less desirable location depending on the man's importance
and his rank. Many of the Ajia's kabuna have their own plots
241 which they farm. In addition, the Ajia has his own personal
643 farm close to Geldam, which is worked exclusively by his kabuna.
464 All kabuna, important and minor ones alike, under the supervi-
sion of the Ajia's Assistant (Wakil) farm the Ajia's land for
him.

Table II

Percentage of people in Geldam who farm

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Farmed last year</u>
241 Aristocracy	3	2	1 did; 1 not for 15 yrs.
463 Koranic Malams	2	1	no
565 Canteen traders	6	0	
554 N. A. Malams	3	1	farmed last year--only in Geldam 1 1/2 mons.
Kabuna	1	5	3 did; 2 didn't
Craftsmen	3	0	
Talaka	3	4	1 did; 3 didn't
Low-status	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1 did; 1 didn't</u>
Total:	23	15	7 did; 8 didn't farm last year

Not all the people of Geldam farm. As may be seen from Table II, 23 of 38 individuals questioned had a farm of their own (61 per cent); 15 did not have a farm (39 per cent). Although all who live permanently in Geldam and pay taxes there

[GEIDAM]

- 241
565 are entitled to farm land, not all actually farm. Slightly
554 more than half of the talaka, craftsmen, and low-status people
463 in the sample farm; these all farm their own plots assisted by
[463] their wives, the typical pattern of farming for lower class
people. The canteen traders, a group of prosperous individuals
with large households, all have a farm, though none farm
themselves. Their farms are worked for them by their tata njima,
or by hired laborers. Only one of the kabuna in the sample
farms for himself, though of course they all farm for the Ajia
on his farm. Finally, it can be seen that the pattern of farming
is not absolutely regular each year. Seven of the fifteen
individuals who had not made a farm that year had farmed the
241 previous year. Most of the people of Geldam do farm, but none
433 depend entirely on farming for their living and since farming
is a secondary activity for all, they may omit farming on a
given year, and may rent their land to someone else. Still others
have entirely given up farming.

2. Craftsmen.

- 463 The economy of an urban community depends primarily on its
specialists. These may be considered as falling within three
broad categories. The first category is made up of artisans,
that is, skilled workers who produce a product which the ordinary
man cannot easily make for himself, or who perform a service requiring
special skills which are beyond the abilities of every
citizen. These will be referred to here as craftsmen. The sec-

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Vegetation is open orchard bush with fine-leaved thorny trees predominating over an occasional broad-leaved variety. The terrain although very gently undulating here and there is for the most part flat and low lying (elevation 1,000 feet) with a more or less continuous short feathery grass cover. The loose, deep, easily worked sandy soil is excellent for cultivation while the lack of a thick vegetation cover makes the clearing of new farmland a relatively easy task.

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The main cereal crop is millet and a considerable amount of guinea corn (sorghum) is grown, especially in the southern portions of the Emirate. In addition to the grain staples, beans, maize, cassava, cucumber, tomatoes, and squashes are also cultivated, while groundnuts

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are used as the cash crop. In recent years, the agricultural department has been introducing fruit trees into the southern portions of the Emirate and scattering small orchards here and there through the northern bush with the idea of developing a local fruit industry.

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[197]

The people we are concerned with refer to themselves as Kanuri and speak a language of the same name. They call their territory Bornu and sometimes refer to themselves as kam Bornube (the people of Bornu). Among Hausa speakers in Nigeria the Kanuri and their language are known as Beri-Beri, but the Kanuri rarely use this term unless they are away from Bornu.

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[142]

Racially the Kanuri are difficult to place. Like other people at the southern rim of the Sahara they vary from negroid to caucasoid in appearance and in skin colour from coppery brown to very dark. Studies by Chalmers on blood group characteristics have shown that when lumped with other northern Muslim peoples the Kanuri indicate considerable similarity in ABO, MNS, and Rhesus blood groups, to

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• [241]

These three compound heads all farm near one another on the split-up land of their Mo-Bro (they also have cleared other plots), often helping one another in farming duties. They present a united front to the community at large and if one appears in court, the others will also be present.

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The youngest half-brother also learned the butcher's craft, but he has married and moved away to another section of the butcher's quarter and today has virtually nothing to do with his three half-brothers. Some of this half-brother's statements indicate the background of disunity among siblings. He had been raised until puberty in the house of X who was married to his Mo-Sis in the capital. After puberty he came to the house of his Mo-Bro in Magumeri, who was now dead and whose place as compound head had been

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taken by the eldest of the half-brothers. This brother "taught him the knife" (i.e. instructed him in butchering) and he in his turn gave baraum (respect) to the half-brother, who was now also his compound head. Here is a paraphrase translation of his own attitude to the relationship:

I did not have a father and was now living in the house of my elder brother, who was head of the house — therefore I had to give to my brother the same respect as a father and keep myself under his orders. I wanted a wife (all my other brothers had married and moved out to form their own households by now), but my eldest brother ordered me to wait patiently until I learned the occupation properly — he said — continue to stay in my house and carry grass for my horse, and learn the butcher's trade and I will feed you and give you money for spending and buy your clothes. But I was not happy and saved my money in secret and saved enough to take a wife of my own — they were cheap in those days. My older brother was angry and did not agree to the marriage but he still wished for me to stay in the compound — but I did not wish to do this and so I moved away to a house that X, the husband of my Mo-Sis in Maiduguri, owned here in the butcher's quarter.

219.

556 the range of statuses he associated most closely with his own life. (1)

565 The differing life experiences of large segments of the population

829 bring about common ranges of experience for the whole segment. Thus rural peasants form one large massive segment which can be called a class.

565 A large number of people in the city feel themselves to be

369 a part of this lower class segment, the tala or peasants. Certainly the common poverty among them keeps them all within one category of economic activity (materially); however, other factors are involved. A large portion of the city population are extremely recent arrivals in the urban centres. Bornu cities, of which Maiduguri (or Yerwa as it is called in Bornu) is the largest, have grown enormously in the past few decades.

[103] This means that most of the people in urban centres are of recent rural origin and thus still retain many of the sentiments of their background. (2)

This is not meant to contradict the discussion above on the rural/urban.

However, it should be remembered that the distinction is extremely var-

• [241] ious and very recent for many people. Another unifying factor is the maintenance of rural farms by city people, who move out, or send out a son or a servant, to cultivate a farm in the bush during the growing season, thus retaining their contact with the rural areas. One of the other

(1) Differing ranges of experience and personal aspirations may cause an expansion of the scale which people refer to. Thus one very ambitious young trader, from a peasant background, who still lived in the bush but was contemplating a move to the city, told the writer immediately, when asked, that Alhassan Dan Tata of Kano (one of the richest men in Nigeria) was a rich man. Nevertheless, lower class bush people generally used a frame of reference more nearly similar to the young peasant above.

[162] (2) Population figures for Maiduguri are as follows (see Coleman, J.S., op. cit. p. 74):

1921	1931	1953
16,274	24,359	54,646

Government service personnel in Bornu estimated the population of Maiduguri at 75,000 to 80,000 during the period 1956/57.

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Men rule, farm, dye, build, work metals, skin, tan and work leather, slay and handle cattle and small livestock, tailor, embroider, make hats, musical instruments, trade, weave mats, and work as labour-
[463] ers. They are also religious specialists, carpenters, mechanics,
[177] clerks, civil servants and a host of newly introduced jobs of European
562 origin, as well as being the taxpayers. It is no exaggeration to say
572 that the economy is controlled by men. The male head of the household dispenses all income in cash and of kind resulting from farming and craft work. (Women's gardens are not farms but small plots inside the compound). The male doles out money to his wives for petty market buying and does the major purchases of food grains and clothing himself. He also pays for ceremonies, transportation and most of the gift-giving
562 done by himself and the members of his household. Except for pottery
323 production by female specialists, men control all income producing craft work in the society as well as all the major distributive functions.

423

Almost all rural household heads own some land in or near their hamlet or village. Land ownership results from a combination of usufruct and inheritance rights and is related as well to the local political organization. These factors are discussed in more detail in the section below on operating costs. Many urban people obtain rural farms from relatives in the bush or retain plots of land in rural areas after having moved to the city. This latter group sends out either relatives or labourers to work the land. In some cases the household head moves out from the city to bush for the necessary working period required to tend the farm.

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Rural peasants work their own land. The men clear the land and are helped in the planting, hoeing and reaping by their wives, and/
000 or other compound members. Another source of labour is the serwa (co-

476 Another source of labour is the serwa (co-operative work group). This is composed of a group of relatives, friends, and neighbours, not necessarily of the same age group. They help one another to farm, fix or build houses, repair compound walls and other jobs requiring collective effort. These serwa are easily joined and as easily left and may have a long or short life depending upon the interest of the members in obtaining such a labour source.

• 241 For the upper classes and urban farm owners, labourers (usually pagan)
464 are always available during the growing season. Many of these are local pagans living in Bornu, others are migrant labourers who have come to Bornu during the growing season to obtain their cash income for taxes.
(1)

251 When the crop is harvested, food grains are taken from their stalks and stored in underground pits. Although the Kanuri utilize some aboveground storage shelters, underground storage is more widespread.

43 The cash crop (groundnuts) is sold to middlemen (sent to the bush during the harvest season to buy for traders in the city). Surplus producers of food crops store their harvest and visit markets for the rest of the year selling their produce. In Magumeri, two-thirds of the cultivators questioned in the survey were only semi-subsistence farmers. Part but not all of this is made up of income from the cash crop. Thus most people who farm have some other income-producing activity which makes up for the fact that they do not grow enough food or cash crop to maintain themselves for an entire year.

463 Craft production includes such occupations as butcher, black-
829 smith, potter, entertainer, leather worker, native doctor, hunter, dyer, lorry driver, mechanic, bricklayer. This is the Kanuri way of viewing

(1) See Kirke-Greene, A.H.M., Tax and Travel Among the Hill-Tribes of Northern Adamawa, Africa, Vol. 26, No. 4 (1956) pp. 355-369.

Production433
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Kanuri production is tied to two inter-related factors in the physical and social environment of Bornu. These are first the geographical and ecological characteristics of the area, and secondly the differentiation of production into agricultural and non-agricultural pursuits.

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[132]

The Chad basin has a short rainy season running from June to September and crop production is carried during these months. Planting begins about the time of the first rains and the first hoeing takes place shortly afterward. The second hoeing occurs near the end of the rainy season and harvesting is carried out from the beginning of October to the end of November. Each hoeing requires between two to three weeks' work and harvesting may take as long as a month. Between these periods, beyond occasional scrutiny to see that straying cattle have not broken into and eaten the produce, very little work is required in cultivating crops. Thus work on crop production is concentrated into less than six months, leaving the rest of the year free for other activities.

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In Magumeri village area, one-third of the cultivators reported that they did nothing else but farm. Only a few of these have surpluses to sell. The remaining two-thirds of the cultivators are semi-subsistence producers who acquire the remainder of their income from some non-agricultural activity. All cultivators, however, raise some cash crop. The subsistence balance in the area as a whole is maintained by small pockets of intensive surplus producers scattered throughout the entire region. These people are, by family tradition, farmers. They generally have good farm soil, with larger and more numerous holdings per person and their dry season activity consists of marketing

- 241 their surplus crop at the local markets.

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Although not exact, because of the exclusion of non-cultivators from the sample, some measure of the variation in crop production is shown in the following table of average productivity among the cultivators of the farm survey.

TABLE XI

Table of Average (calculated) Yields for Seventy-five Cultivators

Occupation	Millet (bags, threshed)	Groundnuts (bags, decorticated)
Farmers	22	9
Craftsmen	17	5
Traders	7	4
Political and Religious Specialists	5	2

One bag of threshed millet, average weight - 190 lbs.

One bag of decorticated groundnuts, average weight - 200 lbs.

Increases or decreases in production from previous years were reported by 24 (32%) of the 75 cultivators. The following are the reasons given for this variation:

TABLE XII

	N
1) Increase or decrease in number of wives	8
2) Other activities interrupted farm work during the growing and harvest season	7
3) Sickness	6
4) More help in the compound (male)	1
5) Soil depleted	1
6) Damage by smut	1
Total:	24

Thus increase or decrease in number of wives, non-farming activities, and sickness during the growing season seem to be the large

- [128] (1) These figures are constructed from the acreage of each farmer, multiplied by the average yield per acre in the sample. Reported yield figures on millet (not groundnuts) were so at variance with calculated yield that their reliability is extremely questionable. This may not be due entirely to deliberate falsification by respondents, since they were asked to estimate yields in bags, whereas for the most part this crop is stored in large underground pits, or above-ground storage shelters.

• 241
433 est factors affecting crop fluctuations from year to year. The seven cases of loss in crop which resulted from inattention to farm work because of other activities, refer mainly to economic pursuits, especially retail and wholesale trade, which took the man away from his household during the growing season. The one exception to this rule was a man who had been to Maiduguri with his family in order to fight a court case.

The table on occupation and crop production reveals the pattern of crop production among the various groups in the community. The increases and decreases in production give some measure of the amount of variation that may be expected from year to year. What follows is a discussion of the factors that affect this variation.

[164]
[136] The growing season is also a time of general biological increase in Bornu. The rain not only brings the blessing of fertility to the land, it also initiates a period of increased malaria, guinea worm and other plant and animal infestations, as well as the arrival of cattle nomads whose herds may stray into a cultivator's plots, and periodic hordes of locusts. These factors may at any time reduce a farmer's yield and add a constant element of uncertainty to his life. It is no wonder that prayers, charms, and divinatory practices are utilized in combination with the more "rational" agricultural techniques.

The amount of land under cultivation, and its location close to, or far away, from the settlement varies with the kind of primary occupational interest of the farm owner. This is easily seen in the table of average yields above, in which farmers and craftsmen have much larger yields than traders or religious and political specialists. These figures point up the fact that in Bornu a man's non-farming activities especially if they are in trade, politics or religion, tend to impinge

241 upon his farm production. One cultivator, a subordinate of the Dis-
 433 trict Head, illustrated this point when he remarked that he had been
 given some good land by his superior. He told how his tax collection
 duties which took him away during the rainy season had severely lim-
 [571] ited his ability to farm. Furthermore, as a comparative newcomer to
 the town, and a supporter of such a politically powerful man as the DH
 he was not welcome in a co-operative work group, and had no subordinates
 or kinsmen in his own compound to care for the crops in his absence.

241 The number of wives a cultivator has available for work is
 464 a major factor in crop production. The high divorce rate makes this
 [586] primary source of labour unpredictable for each farmer from year to
 (1) year. Numbers and nature of barsum subordinates again help determine
 [571] the labour supply. If a man has many followers, his labour source is
 large and secure; if he has few or none, his labour problem is a limit-
 [476] ing one in crop production. Membership in a co-operative work group
 (serwa) may, however, help to alleviate labour problems for some, and
 about 60% of the farmers and craftsmen and 35% of the trader and politi-
 cal and religious specialists, use this source of supply. (2) Finally, for
 those who can afford wage labour, at a price per crop, or on daily sal-
 aries, such is generally available in all but the smallest towns of Bornu.

[434] The difficulty is that most peasant households are numerical-
 241 ly small, and have little liquid capital. This limits the secure avail-
 464 ability of labour to those with stable marriage relations, or to those
 571 with long and fruitful social relations in one place, i.e. kinship ties
 or working barsum relationships with others in the same locality are

- (1) See Cohen, R., Marriage Instability and its Determinants Among the Kanuri of Northern Nigeria, (1958) (unpublished).
 (2) See below p. 303.

241 the surest safeguards against labour shortages due to sudden (and com-
 464 mon) divorces. This is the reason why people with longer associations
 571 in one place, and stronger ties of kinship in the community are less
 vulnerable economically to the high divorce rate than newcomers, or
 those with their primary social ties outside Magumeri. The exception
 to this generalization is, of course, the upper class who can either
 afford to use wage labour, or utilize the subservience of followers.

433 Variations in price bring about fluctuations in farming
 435 activities. A higher price of millet one year induces a somewhat great-
 er interest by rural and urban dwellers in the production of food grains.
 On the other hand, an increase by Government of groundnut prices paid
 to producers causes greater interest and some increase in acreage de-
 voted to cash cropping. Several city dwellers who had not farmed for
 periods of two to six years told the writer that they were either going
 to go themselves, or send a subordinate, to the bush the following year
 to raise millet, because the 1956-57 price had risen as high as 39/-
 to 41/- per bag.

433 Besides this year to year fluctuation, there has been a
 435 steady rise in the Bornu economy over the past two decades. From 1938
 458 to 1957 the prices in millet and groundnuts have been as follows: (1)

TABLE XIII

	Millet (to consumer) shillings per bag	Groundnuts pounds per ton to producer
1938	15	5
1957	30	33
Percentage increase	100%	660%

£ Maiduguri market (average)
 £ General price for Bornu

(1) Figures for 1938 taken from Economic Assessment Report (1938), file
 #3014, Bornu Provincial Government Office, Maiduguri. General
 prices for 1957 are taken from observations in the Maiduguri, Gaidam,
 Damaturu and Magumeri markets.

592 The net effect, productively, seems to be one of disunity since there are really three economic units within the one household. Cohesion is due to kinship and should trouble arise, legal, economic, or political, the unity within this compound, and with the others around it, to which its members are agnatically related, are observable immediately. Even the economic disunity is only partial, since Dolo often helps his older brother at the market, and both do farm work and run messages for their father.

241 Ka'anami has a bush farm to the south of Magumeri village
[423] and three small plots in the nearby hamlet of Falonge where he used to live. His wife helps him to plant, hoe, and harvest the crop, as do
[435] his brothers. In 1955 he harvested twelve bags of millet (cash value
[432] £30/0/0) and four bags of groundnuts (cash value £11/0/0). Thus his
[251] agricultural production totalled £41/0/0, one-quarter of which he sold for cash, and three-quarters of which he stored for consumption.

322 Many (but not all) of the men in Ka'anami's agnatic kinship group are calabash makers. This consists of buying dried, raw, half gourds, scraping the insides smooth, and carving designs on the
[412] outer surface with hot irons. The tools are simple, wood-handled iron
[372] blades, obtained from the blacksmith, and the only other material necessary is charcoal for the fire, which is extremely cheap.

322 During the dry season, Ka'anami makes on the average two
433 calabashes per day on Fridays and Saturdays, and this ranges from one
443 to three, or on the average about four per week. Sunday he attends the Magumeri market and sells his wares. He buys his raw calabashes from the Thursday market (Ngubura) and does not work much on Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday, except to do commissions for people who give him special orders. He may also attend nearby markets on Monday or Tuesday

231 Mala Bukar, the butcher

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The butcher's craft, although comparatively lucrative, is a low status occupation. It requires technical skills and social relations beyond the tribe. Manual and anatomical knowledge of butchery is learned during the apprenticeship period, often referred to as "taking up the knife". The craft also requires continuous relations with cattle owners, who supply the raw material for the work. Since cows are primarily kept by Fulani and Shuwa nomads, this requires inter-tribal relations for the butcher with the cattle people. Sheep and goats are kept locally and sold generally by their keepers to one of the several local butchers.

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Mala Bukar lives with his two wives, the younger of whom has a small child, aged about three, and two tada njima (sons of the house, in this case, apprentices). There are five huts in the compound, one each for the wives, one for himself, one for the two apprentices, and one for meat storage. The apprentices are both sons of butchers unrelated but known to Mala Bukar. They explained that they wished to travel about the country before they settled down in their home towns as butchers. One seemed much surer of returning eventually to his father's household than the other. They treat Mala Bukar with as much respect as they would a real biological father, but seem to have a somewhat more open discussion with him of their sexual life than sons who live at home.

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Mala Bukar has inherited some farmland with the kulo fatobe area (the near or house farm area). He also has a plot farther out in the kulo karabe area (far or bush farm area). In addition, his apprentices are clearing (1956) a new plot in the bush farm area which is to replace a depleted one next year. The apprentices are also clearing

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* 241 small plots of their own at the same time on which they hope to grow cash crops. In 1955, Mala Bukar obtained ten bags of millet and three of groundnuts. Cash value of this crop at prevailing prices is £20.0.0.

241
592 Mala Bukar does no actual farm work himself. His apprentices and wives (never working together at the same time and place, plant, hoe and harvest his crop. He does give some directions at the beginning of these operations and he decides on the planting and harvesting dates. The apprentices make the farm work of the wives less essential in this case than is usual. This gives these women a great deal more free time, especially in the wet season, than almost any other married women in town, with the exception of the head dyer's wives. This man also has several apprentices. Mala Bukar's wives spend their productive energies in cooking, bringing water for the household, and selling the hooves of slaughtered animals which their husband gives them as a source of private income for themselves.

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463 Since Mala Bukar's work schedule is tied to the availability of animals for slaughter, it appears at first glance to have a random quality. Exceptions to this are his rigid adherence to Friday as a day of prayer, or at least, no slaughter, and Sunday which is the Magumeri market day. However, he may butcher a sheep or a goat on the spot on Sunday if the selling is brisk and animals are to be had. Trips to other markets in the vicinity are dependent upon his immediate stocks of meat, and upon what he hears about demand at other markets.

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435 For six months of the year he deals only in sheep and goats (this is not true of butchers at larger centres, where many people can afford beef). One goat costs from 31/- to 40/- and he prepares and sells on the average four per week, at a profit of 2/- to 4/- each, i.e. an average profit of 3/- each or 12/- per week. Sheep cost him usually

425 Permission should be sought
632 for a new farm in either area. However, land obtained from the Lawan
423 in the "house" farm section is already cleared and bounded into plots;
this type of acquisition is thought and spoken of as a bequest. On
the other hand, permission to use bush land is not so much a grant from
the Lawan as a formal recognition of his political leadership in the
community. Furthermore, bushland must be cleared and the act of clear-
ing is a traditionally accepted criterion for the establishment of
property rights.

423 The "house" farms are not be confused with the small garden
241 (1)
plots kept usually by women inside the compound walls. These latter
plots are planted with early maturing maize, millet and vegetables,
which are used for easing the hard times before the harvest and as a
423 private source of income by women. To the Kanuri, the word fato used
[829] to describe a piece of land adjacent to the town or village reflects
their conception of the settlement as a set of extended patrilocal
households. The lands immediately adjacent to a stable settlement are
owned by the long term resident households and passed on to descendants.
These people also own bush farms but can be distinguished from more re-
cent arrivals to the town by their ownership of plots in the house farm
are.

423 The difference between bush and "house" farms can thus be
829 seen in Kanuri eyes as a difference in social identification. A "house"
farm represents older, more integrated membership in the community,
while a bush farm indicates newness or transience. The former means a
working relationship, not only a formal one, between the owner and the

[192] (1) There is no difficulty here if the term is translated literally;
fato - of the compound, i.e. the genitive case, meaning the farm
of the compound. In-the-compound would require the use of the Kan-
uri word suro - in or inside of.

425
571 The high proportion of land obtained by political and religious specialists from the political leader reflects the social relations of these informants, many of whom have a close subordinate relationship to followers and supporters of the Lawan of their town.

- 241 Operating costs for rural farm plots are governed by two
[651] factors. Firstly, there are tithes (sakat) which all farmers pay to their
[134] local political leader as a form of traditional tax. Secondly, there
[433] is soil depletion which brings decreasing results for equal effort through
time. Thus even with proper planting, weeding and harvesting, the yield
on a one acre plot of millet may range from eighty to four hundred pounds
of threshed product, while the range for groundnuts is almost as large
(one hundred and ten to three hundred and fifty pounds of decorticated
242 nuts per acre). Farm plots are generally used for three to five year
425 periods and then left fallow for four to six years. It should be noted
571 that this soil depletion factor tends to activate the political organization.
(1) The farmer requiring new land generally seeks the advice of his
local political leader as to whether to clear new bush land or perhaps
(2) take up some unused old plot already cleared, if such be available.

423 In summary, land in Bornu can be categorized under four headings: (1) private property, which today refers primarily to house sites in large cities: these are not deeded but they can be rented or sold in a commercial transaction; (2) usufruct property, that is owned because the holder uses it, or cleared it from the bush; this also refers to

- [631] (1) Increased numbers in the household operates to the same effect.
(2) In order to avoid the anomaly of a higher political authority having to ask a lower one for favours, in places like Magumeri which house a District Head, a large section of land is set aside for the use of the incumbent D.H. and his subordinates. Thus the followers of the D.H. may apply directly to him rather than the local Lawan for land use rights. N.A. employees have their choice, they may ask the D.H. or the Lawan if they wish to obtain farm plots. In all these cases it is understood that tithing is unnecessary, for none of the persons involved are "peasants of Lawan".

- 423 rural house sites; (3) resting land which is owned through usufruct right but whose soil is depleted; (4) virgin land between settlements, 425 which is open to ownership through the operation of usufruct rights. Finally, land may be transferred through inheritance, allocation by political leaders, clearing of bush and sale or gift.

Labour

- 464 Besides his own efforts, the Kanuri male householder can obtain 874 help for his craft work from apprentices, who have entered his service. On his farm he may get extra labour from: (1) his wife or wives; 241 (2) other compound members, such as apprentices, wives' relatives, or 464 his own kinsmen or children, if these latter are old enough to contribute; 476 (3) hired labourers who may work either on a contract price for the entire job, or by the day; (4) the co-operative work group (serwa) mentioned above. These people are not necessarily of the same age group. They help one another at farming, building and fixing houses, compound walls and other jobs requiring collective effort. Serwa are easily joined and as easily left and may have a long or a short life depending upon the interest of the members in obtaining such a labour source, as well as upon social and physical mobility of individual group members. The following table indicates the sources of labour utilized by the seventy-five farm owners in the survey.

TABLE XVIII

Table Showing Numbers and Percentages of Cultivators Utilizing the Four Kinds of Labour Sources, in the Farm Survey

Occupation	N	Men using wives		Men using others in compound		Men using labourers		Men using <u>serwa</u>	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
farmers	25	25	100	13	52	8	32	15	60
craftsmen	16	16	100	12	75	7	44	9	56
traders	17	17	100	13	77	12	71	6	35
political and religious spec.	17	16	94	5	29	6	35	6	35
Totals	75	74	98	43	57	33	44	36	48

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 593 The most striking result here is the almost universal reliance upon wives as a source of labour. The only exception in the sample was an upper class person, the headmaster of the Magumeri Junior Primary School, whose wife was confined to the compound in a marriage of seclusion. Several other figures in the table are suggestive. The relatively low percentage of "others in the compound" used by political (1) and religious specialists provokes the comment that the political specialists and a few of the religious practitioners in this group were subordinates of local political leaders. They in their turn had very few dependants or subordinates in their own compounds. The relatively low percentage of co-operative work group labour utilized by both traders and the political and religious specialists compared with the other (2) groups reflects their higher mobility and looser social ties with settled rural community life. Finally, the disproportionately high use of labourers by the traders indicates their interest in farming, but their inability to utilize traditional social relationships of kinship and/or settlement patterns to obtain labour sources, and points again to their looser integration in the local social organization.

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 511 Leaving aside urban or upper class members, the cash expenditures for the remaining fifteen rural budgets ranged from one to twelve pounds per annum for 1955-56 with four separate budgets totalling twelve pounds each for operating expenses. Taking £7.0.0 as a rough median measure of central tendency, this brings the total calculated annual expenditures for rural households in Bornu to £65.0.0 in cash values.

- (1) This group is significantly different from the next lowest category in the table (farmers) at nearly the .05 level ($P = 2.14$).
- (2) This difference is significant at the .05 level ($P = 4.05$) when the two top rows of serwa use are lumped and compared with the two bottom ones.

- 121 work. This means that minute details of innovation and social life in general can be recorded at the level of the "common man" as contrasted with the analysis of regional or national productivity figures, or of government policies, or United Nations statistics. What emerges is not, therefore, a total picture of the development process, but rather a grass roots view of the reaction to planned culture change by the people at whom the programme was aimed in the first place.

The purpose of this article is to document and analyse an innovation that succeeded technically, and yet failed because the human components of the innovation experience were not taken into account.

- 101 The place is Africa, the time is 1956-57. But it could very well be the Near East, Asia or South America, anytime between 1940 and 1960. The people are the Kanuri of Bornu Province, Northern Nigeria, but they could be peasants anywhere.

The Context

- 174 The Kanuri of Bornu province in northeastern Nigeria have
175 been organized as a Muslim emirate in the Chad basin for
[131] many centuries. Their language classification by Greenberg
[642] (1954), early Arabic sources, and the scattered work of a few
interested scholars, supports the notion of their continuity in
the region, with possible origins somewhere to the northeast of
[77] their present habitat. The pre-colonial emirate kept up continual
trade and cultural contacts with the Maghreb during its long
history as an organized state.

- 161 The Kanuri number about one and a half million. The
311 population density is approximately sixty per square mile and
there is no pressure on farmland, which can be extended simply
by clearing new bush areas further away from the population
433 settlements. The majority of the people are peasants who carry
• 241 on three analytically separable economic activities. These consist
44 of (1) farming, primarily millet and guinea corn, supplemented
[434] by maize, beans, squashes, cucumbers, and groundnuts, (2) cash
cropping, mostly groundnuts, and (3) a dry season non-farming
activity connected with the market. Market activities are in

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turn divided into craft work, sales of surplus agricultural products, and a complex middleman trade between markets. There is a large variation in dependence upon the market as against subsistence agriculture for obtaining total income, although some farming is carried on by almost everyone except a few full-time specialists.

The society is stratified, with status based on tribal membership, occupation, birth, age, wealth, and to some extent, urban residence identifications. The people recognize two major class divisions — the upper or ruling class (*Kantuoma*) and the broad base of the peasant class (*tala*), under the autocratic hegemony of the rulers. Rosman (1959) uses eight separate categories of social status in his work on Kanuri acculturation. Cohen (1959) has used status gradients and their inter-relationships to explain social differentiation, upward mobility, and class structure.

The society has a monarch, the Shehu, in his capital city of Maiduguri, and courtly life with nobles, including *Ajia*, or District Heads, who live in their own district capitals as sub-rulers of twenty-one segments of the emirate under the Shehu. District Heads in turn have under their jurisdiction a group of contiguous Village Area units headed by *Lawan* or Village Heads. Under these latter are Hamlet Heads, *Bulama*, in charge of small settlements of contiguous compounds. Peasants call themselves the peasants of such and such a *Lawan*. Today the Native Administration departments have their personnel stationed throughout the districts. Along with the District Head and his followers they form an urban upper class living in the districts throughout the state.

The Situation

As part of a general programme of economic development in Northern Nigeria, agricultural research stations have been set up by the government in every province of the region. The results are published in annual reports so that Agricultural Officers may begin introducing new seeds, fertilizers, and even new crops on a wide scale as soon as these improvements are known to be feasible under local conditions.

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197 During 1956-7 the Agricultural Officer of Bornu Province was a Kanuri who had studied tropical agriculture in Egypt, Iraq, Israel, and India. He was very enthusiastic about the introduction of citrus crops into the area, and spent a large part of his time helping to get this programme under way in the southern part of the province. He was also interested in introducing super-phosphate fertilizer into the agricultural practices of Kanuri cultivators to increase the yield of millet and groundnuts.

241 The average yields for the province using traditional techniques are approximately 600 lbs. of groundnuts (decorticated) and 400 lbs. of millet (threshed) per acre. The yields diminish as one travels north towards the desert, and farm sizes increase in proportion, although farm size is also dependent upon family size, marriage stability, and the socio-economic relations of the cultivator within the community (Cohen, 1959). Research has
[242] proven that the use of super-phosphate fertilizer can raise agricultural productivity in Bornu from 25% to 40% above that normally obtained with traditional growing techniques.

[221] Two methods of planting crops are known. The bulk of the farm plots for most cultivators are the *kulo karabe* or far farms.¹ These are located beyond a two hundred yard perimeter (approximately) around the village. Here crops are planted a week or two after the first rains, hoed twice during the wet season, and harvested in the period from November to the end of December. In the *kulo fatobe* or near farms, within a two hundred yard perimeter around the village, and within the household itself, maize and vegetables are planted with compost, mostly from sheep, goats, horses, and burnt ashes. This is placed on the soil during planting, and may be applied again during the growing season. Sometimes the compost is put into the ground along with the seeds.

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[62] The following course of events was observed in Magumeri, a comparatively small district capital (population 2000), forty-five miles northwest of Maiduguri, the provincial capital.

¹ Literally this expression means "bush farm," and *kulo fatobe* translated literally would be "house farm." For purposes of descriptive convenience and accuracy, the writer has coined the phrases "near" and "far" farms.

829 This triviality¹ is supported by traditional notions of cultural
 779 and social change. It has often been said that Muslims are tied
 [114] to their traditional ways because of the fatalism inherent in
 their religious beliefs. Unfortunately this is an overgeneral-
 ization that explains very little, and certainly not the course of
 events described above. The Kanuri are Muslim, and they
 often do make fatalistic statements. But, their fatalism always
 [369] concerns areas of total impotence as these are conceived of by
 [665] the speaker. Thus rural peasants speak in a fatalistic way about
 the political organization of Bornu, although this is not the case
 with many urban persons who belong to, or support, reform parties.
 Or again, fatalism may be expressed over death, or knowledge
 of God, or the origin of the world, or its future. Fatalism is
 never referred to, however, for areas of behaviour that the in-
 dividual construes to be susceptible to change by human efforts.
 829 This is especially true of two closely related areas of social life.
 557 (a) the economic sphere, and (b) social relations. The Kanuri
 571 believe that it is possible and desirable to increase economic
 status by one's own efforts. The preferred route to economic
 betterment is not via technology, although this is important, but
 by improving social relations. Thus to become a truck driver,
 one needs workable relations with people who are drivers, so
 that the status of apprentice may be achieved. That lorries are
 a technological improvement over horses and donkeys is easily
 [779] perceived and accepted. That is to say, the Kanuri are not
 against change because as Muslims they accept the traditional
 world as a manifestation of God's will. They do believe, how-
 ever, that individual advancement is gained primarily through
 profitable social relations, and only secondarily through tech-
 nology.

•241 It should also be noted in this respect that the Magumeri peas-
 433 ants never at any time voice any dissatisfaction with the quantity
 592 of their crop yields *using customary techniques*. Complaints are
 heard but these always have to do with other aspects of farm
 production more closely related to family and household organiz-
 ation. Traditionally, and this is so today, crop yields are in-
 creased through expanding one's acreage under cultivation. For
 all peasants questioned this is accomplished through the expansion
 of their household size, either by taking more wives, or client

¹ [i.e., that dictatorial powers were not invoked over the
 decision to use or not to use fertilizer, thus defining the
 whole matter as trivial and unimportant in the minds of
 the people. -- Analyst]

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followers, or having children. Conversely, peasants who experience a decrease in crop yields attribute this to a loss of personnel in their household (Cohen, 1959: 272-5). Thus increased yields like many other facets of self-improvement in Bornu are based on social relations, not technology, when seen from the peasants' point of view. 2410
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Although there is no confirming evidence, another factor may have been operating in this situation. The sudden release from autocratic leadership could have been an expression of the aggression, hostility, and rebelliousness, usually associated with psychological reactions to authoritarian leadership. White and Lippitt (1953: 602) have shown this to be so in their studies of children's clubs, and it may have a much wider application. Whether or not people with a long tradition of autocratic social organization experience these same feelings, with the same intensity is a question which must await further research. 000

The field worker, Malam Abdulla, was a young man of twenty-two. He had recently graduated from a one-year course at an agricultural technical training college and hoped to rise quickly in the Bornu department. He was, however, blocked by the seniority system which placed over him people with less education than himself. The college officials had evidently made much of the advantages of education and promised the graduates rapid advancement. But, jealousy, nepotism, and his youth held him back, for the moment, from obtaining a higher post. Malam Abdulla deeply resented this, and continually blamed his lot upon the traditional social order of Bornu. He admired European technology, which had given him his hoped-for status, and was also attracted to the western ideology of liberal democracy, with which he had come into contact in secondary school. 159
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His department head, the Agricultural Officer, also admired European technology and culture. He lived in a European house, ate western food, and could on occasion act as a completely acculturated person. That is to say, both the department head, and the field worker indicated a generalized cathexis for western culture, not just its technology.